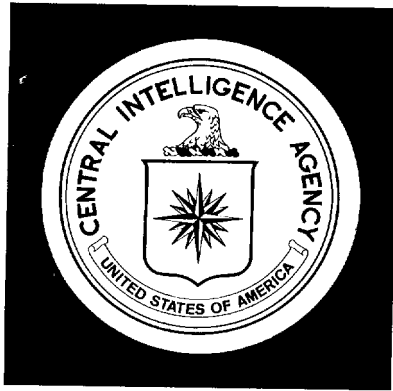


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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

*Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower  
Developments in Indochina*

NRO Review Completed.

NSA review completed

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ER IM 73-19-9  
10 April 1973

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10 April 1973

### Recent Communist Logistical and Manpower Developments in Indochina

The overall pace of detected logistical activity seems to have fallen somewhat during the first week of April. With the approaching rainy season, the pace may slow even further, but there are indications that Hanoi intends to keep some supplies moving through Laos during the summer.

- Some Communist logistical forces in Laos are being granted leave to return to North Vietnam for short visits, but significant supply deliveries continue to be noted throughout the system.
- A major logistical entity in southern North Vietnam has reported that "technical weapons" -- possibly armor or artillery -- will be moving north through its area. This equipment may have come out of Laos, implying that the Communists, in closing down some of their facilities there, no longer require the scale of firepower deployment that they have hitherto maintained.

On the manpower side, no new infiltration groups were detected entering the pipeline in North Vietnam during the past week, and one combat infiltration group originally scheduled for northern South Vietnam has been redirected northward within North Vietnam. It appears that this dry season's infiltration of regular combat troops may now have ended and that the infiltration of civilian and military specialists also may be abating. In other developments:

- Two antiaircraft regiments are preparing to move or are in the process of moving from Quang Tri Province into southern Laos.
- Two NVA SA-2 sites were established near Khe Sanh during the past eight days.
- A headquarters element of an NVA armor regiment apparently deployed from North Vietnam to the border area of Cambodia and South Vietnam's Military Region 3 by mid-March and may be serving as a regional armor controlling authority for southern South Vietnam.
- The buildup of Communist forces in the Ta Viang-Xieng Khouangville area of northern Laos is continuing, suggesting the possibility of future military activity.



## DISCUSSION

## Recent Communist Logistical Developments

*North Vietnam*

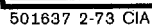
1. Substantial supply movements are still under way in North Vietnam, although our information is very sketchy. Fairly large quantities of supplies are still being directed toward Communist forces in Laos and South Vietnam.

2. A major logistics-related entity slightly north of Vinh reported on 2 April that it had pumped nearly 7,000 tons of petroleum during March. A significant portion of the petroleum was probably to move farther by pipeline southward to South Vietnam and Laos. High levels of activity have been observed elsewhere in the southern North Vietnamese Panhandle.

[redacted] has revealed extensive logistical activity in several areas of the southern Panhandle. [redacted]

[redacted] There have been a number of COMINT reports of extensive logistical activities in and around Dong Hoi (Binh Tram 26). Indications of truck traffic through the area included reports from an element of Binh Tram 26 that a total of more than 200 vehicles had transited a vehicle checkpoint on 6 and 7 April. Another element of the binh tram reported that it had received more than 45 tons of supplies on 2 April and had shipped some 70 tons. According to enemy communications, part of the referenced activity was via a "new tramway," possibly an extension of the present one which parallels the Giang River. The following day the binh tram revealed that it would continue delivering "weapons" during the month of April.

3. In another development, Binh Tram 26 was advised on 3 April to prepare for the movement of "heavy technical weapons" through its area of responsibility some time during the period 4 to 16 April. The weapons referred to, whatever their nature, reportedly were in the Binh Tram 14 area - at the Ban Karai Pass - at the time and would require assistance from Binh Tram 26 in Quang Binh Province. The term "technical weapons" has generally been interpreted to represent armor or artillery, and it appears that some such equipment may be moving northward. Such a shifting of resources may be in connection with the current reorganization of the North Vietnamese logistical network in the Laotian Panhandle



currently under way. The reorganization is consolidating some of the field entities, and presumably less firepower would be required to keep supply channels adequately protected.

*Laos and Cambodia*

4. The overall pace of detected logistical activity in Laos declined during the past week. It was clear, however, that significant resupply was continuing. On the input corridors to Laos, [ ] vehicle activity was down somewhat compared with the average level detected in March. Significantly, however, a southbound emphasis on detected movers prevailed, an indication that large quantities of supplies are still being moved into Laos. Although the heaviest activity continues to be detected near Ban Karai Pass, where the level of detected southbound activity increased from last week, ground observers have noted sustained, albeit light, truck traffic through Mu Gia Pass, and recent aerial photography has revealed that the Communists have completed some new road construction just south of Mu Gia. Photography also confirmed continuing high levels of activity west of the DMZ, as 27 southbound cargo trucks were noted on Route 1033

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5. In the central Panhandle, COMINT on 7 April revealed heavy vehicle activity. According to an intercept, about 121 vehicles had been received by an element of Group 472, and additional large numbers of vehicles were sent out, probably to the south. Neither the time frame over which this activity took place nor the types or quantities of cargo moved were revealed; however, it was obvious that a high percentage of the available vehicles in the element's area were being used. Again, photography during the week confirmed heavy vehicle activity, especially on Route 99. [ ]

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[ ] more than 170 vehicles were spotted along that route, roughly between Muong Nong and Ban Bac. Well over half were southbound and were confirmed as carrying cargo, probably including some sections of petroleum pipeline. Some 130-mm field guns also were observed being towed south. The remaining vehicles noted were either headed north or parked along the road.

6. COMINT revealed on 4 April that major logistical elements in the central Panhandle are now preparing storage areas to facilitate the movement and storage of cargo during the forthcoming rainy season. No details on the type of activity were provided; however, the following day a Group 472 element referenced "the plan to construct storage areas at each position to stockpile foodstuffs, weapons, and tools for the unit which is calculated to arrive in December of 1973."

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7. Farther south in Laos, detections of activity were highlighted by [ ] photography showing nearly 70 vehicles carrying cargo southward through the Chavane area. It is likely that most of these vehicles were transporting military supplies toward South Vietnam's Central Highlands or the COSVN area.

8. In spite of this heavy activity, some of the personnel now operating the logistical network are being scheduled for leave. A new leave policy has been established and probably is already being implemented in the Group 472 area. The first indications of this came on 1 April, when the 592nd Engineer Regiment reported that those personnel who had been assigned to the battlefield for three or more years or who had family or personal problems would be given first priority. Subsequent information revealed that leave is to be granted for 20-day periods, except in special circumstances where longer leaves are warranted. Thirty men are to be granted leave in each phase. By 6 April a similar leave policy had been announced by the 34th NVA Engineer Regiment (formerly Binh Tram 34), and although no specific references have yet been made, it is likely that the policy extends to Groups 470 and 471. It is clear from these developments that the North Vietnamese now believe they can sustain the flow of supplies they deem necessary with somewhat fewer people. Moreover, implementation of the leave policy at this time could be a signal that the pace of logistical activity will now decline in southern Laos, a decline that is to be expected anyway as the rainy season approaches.

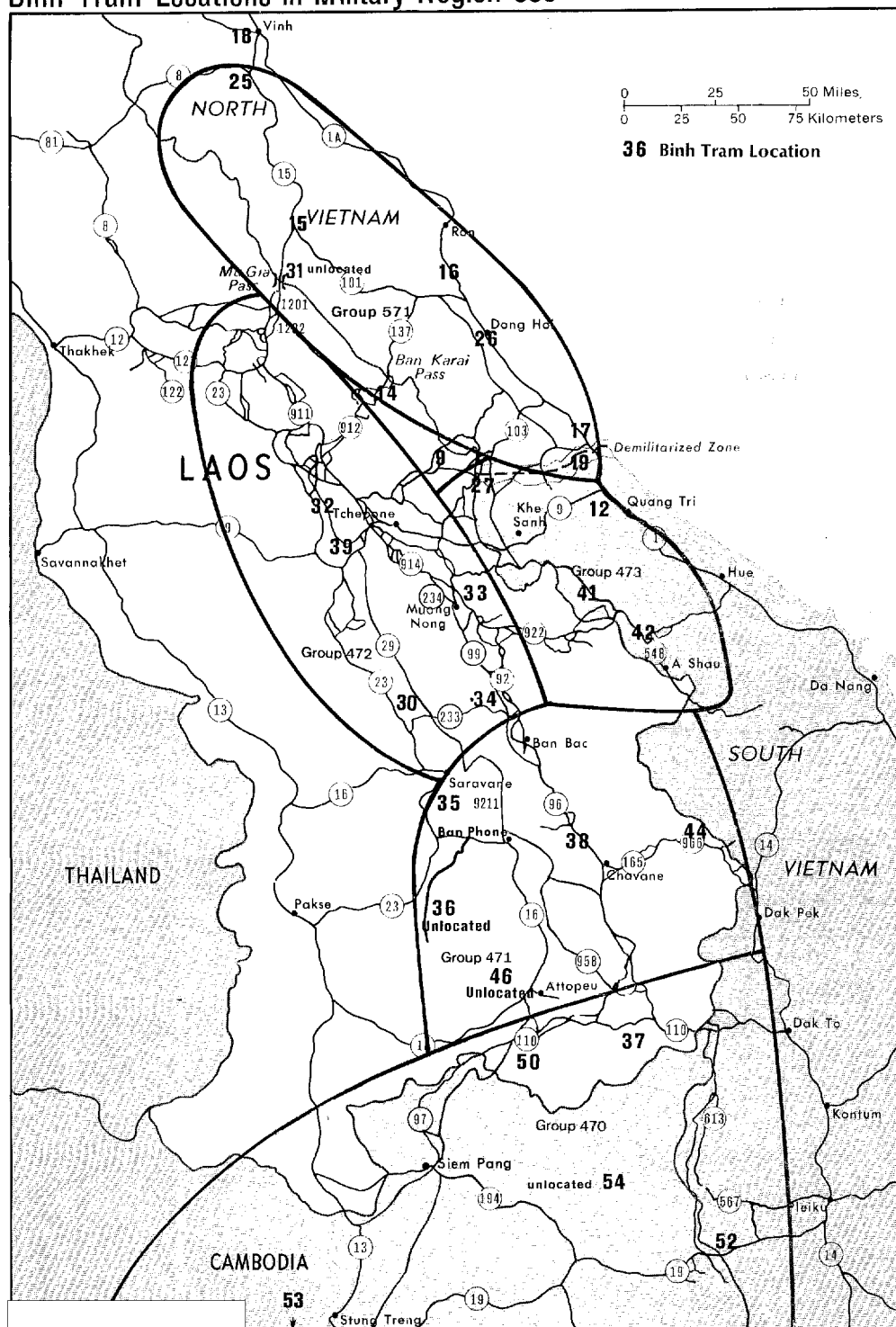
9. Inside Cambodia, major roads and water supply routes displayed heavy use again this week, including heavy truck traffic from the southern Laotian border into the border base areas around Snuol and Mimot. Continued heavy US air attacks against Communist transport equipment and traffic control points appear to be causing some traffic slowdowns, particularly along Route 19 leading to the B-3 Front. Numerous stacks of supplies have piled up there in spite of road crews working hard to keep interdiction points open and trucks moving.

10. Reconnaissance of late March over the Route 19 border crossing reveals extensive new road building activity which appears aimed not only at improving motorable access on the South Vietnamese side of the border, but also probably at attempting to bypass the ICCS monitoring site on Route 19 at Duc Co.

### *South Vietnam*

11. Major Communist logistical elements in northern South Vietnam have continued to report the movement of supplies, including ordnance;

## Binh Tram Locations in Military Region 559



Note: As indicated in the memorandum the North Vietnamese logistical network in MR 559 is currently undergoing a major reorganization. This map does not reflect such changes, and is intended only as a reference to the various binh trams' areas of operation prior to the recent changes. New maps will be prepared when our information on the new organization warrants.

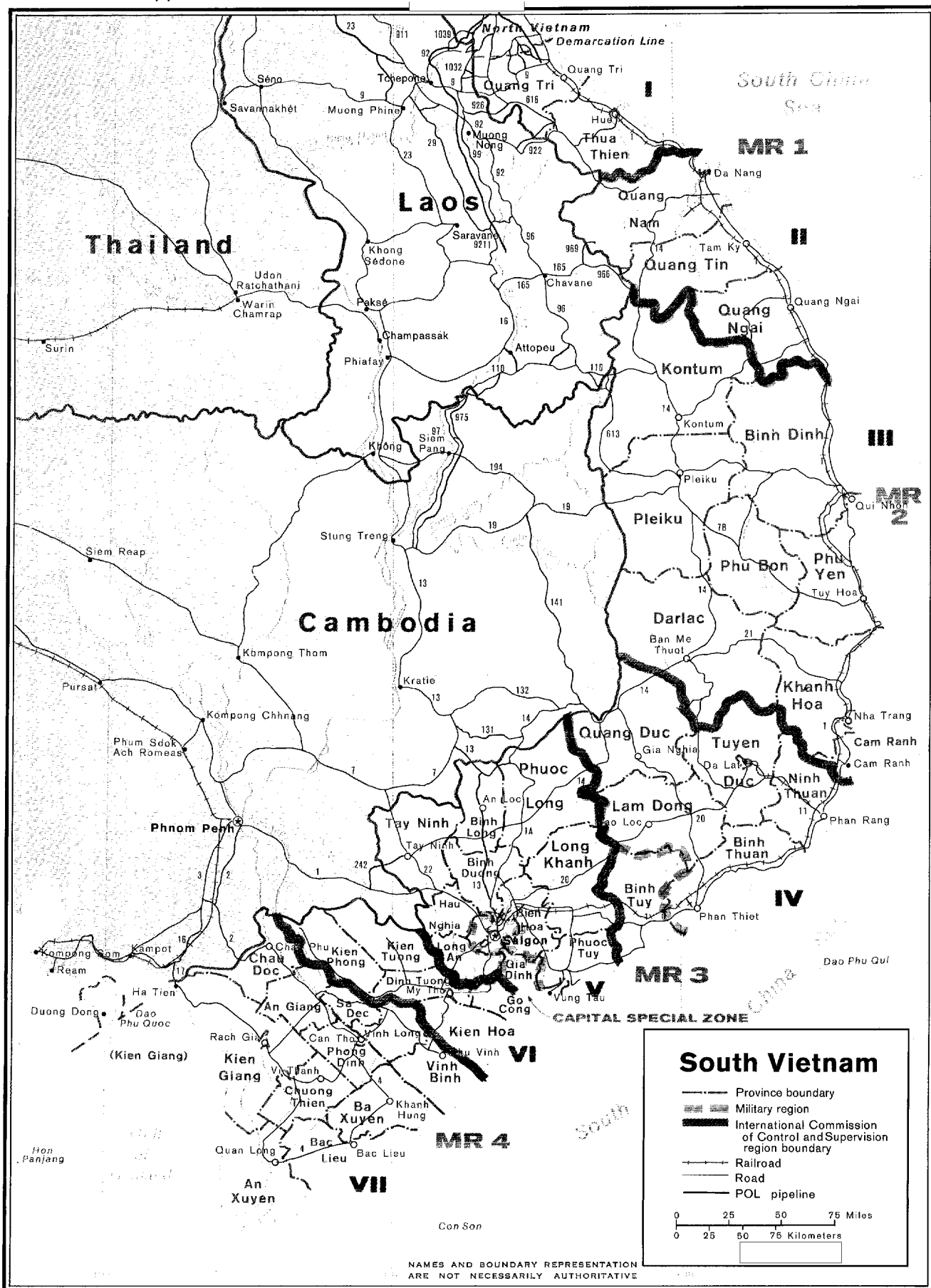


however, totals are down somewhat from reports of recent weeks. The heaviest recent activity has been detected in aerial photography. On [redacted] for example, 137 trucks were spotted along Route 9 in northeastern Quang Tri Province. Another 53 vehicles were spotted along Routes 608 and 616 around Khe Sanh on the same day. Some storage facilities in Quang Tri Province have been instructed not to accept any more cargo, probably to avoid concentrating too much in any one area. Some of the detected activity in eastern Military Region (MR) 1 appears to be associated with Binh Tram 41's relocation to a new position (reported last week). Recently, the binh tram reported it had a "great deal" of equipment, food, and ordnance that had to be moved.

12. The Communists are also continuing to funnel supplies through the A Shau Valley in western Thua Thien Province. Heavy truck traffic is apparent on Route 548 in the A Shau, and signs of vehicle use and recent repair work are evident along a major supply corridor leading from the valley. [redacted] as of late March the Communists were building a new base area in the southern part of the A Shau that they plan to fortify with newly infiltrated antiaircraft weapons. According to the report, forces protecting the southern A Shau are already equipped with at least 50 armored vehicles. A subsequent report indicated that the Communists intend to have four divisions in the province before launching an attack and that, in anticipation of those attacks, they have continued to move in foodstuffs and ordnance from Laos as well as from Quang Tri Province. [redacted] two tank regiments -- with 40 tanks each -- had arrived in Thua Thien (from Quang Tri) in late March.

13. In southern MR 1, road construction and truck traffic continue to be observed along Route 614, which the Communists reportedly plan to connect with Route 14. Twenty tanks were spotted in this area on 24 March. Meanwhile, Communist forces in the Quang Nam lowlands, south of Da Nang, are reported to have recently received a large quantity of ammunition, including 122-mm rockets and 82-mm and 37-mm rounds, and Viet Cong units in the region have stepped up efforts to purchase locally grown rice.

14. In northern Quang Ngai Province, a new munitions factory, complete with electric generators, engines, furnaces, and forges, recently has been completed by the Communists. The factory consists of five structures, which are accessible to the new road being built into Quang Ngai from the Laotian border. The 32 factory workers, including two engineers and ten "munitions experts," reportedly use broken weapons, dud ammunition, and aircraft and vehicle parts to assemble new equipment. In



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the southern half of the province, logistical activity probably related to resupplying the NVA 2nd and 3rd Divisions has been detected.

15. In southern South Vietnam, supplies recently infiltrated from Cambodia are being redistributed from northern Binh Long Province into adjacent Phuoc Long Province, where reports indicate that the Communists plan to expand their territorial control. Similarly, Communist forces in Binh Duong and Hau Nghia Provinces are now being resupplied from recently emplaced supply caches along the Saigon River. Supplies are continuing to move to units in Dinh Tuong Province, MR 4.

16. In the lower Delta, Communist munitions shops in Kien Giang Province have received orders to double their production of weapons, particularly of mines, explosive charges, and hand grenades. To increase production, rear services officials are planning to train more munitions workers and distribute additional materiel recently received from COSVN. This increased emphasis on the local production of ammunition – both in the Delta and in MR 1 as noted above – will reduce the requirement for delivering ordnance from North Vietnam.

#### **Recent Manpower Developments in Indochina**

##### ***Personnel Infiltration***

17. No new infiltration groups – either special-purpose or combat replacements -- were reported starting the trip south from North Vietnam during the past week. Furthermore, COMINT has initially identified the diversion of one regular infiltration group away from its original destination in South Vietnam. The 120-man group, now in the Dong Hoi area of North Vietnam, is according to an intercepted message of 5 April being rerouted and sent northward. There is no direct evidence as to when this group started its journey southward, but we believe it could have been sometime in February or early March. The identifying number of the group indicates that it was originally scheduled to go to the northern part of South Vietnam.

18. Farther down in the infiltration pipeline in southern Laos, COMINT also detected for the first time six additional small groups of civilian and military specialists with a total of less than 60 men. These specialists are believed to have departed from North Vietnam some time in February or March.

19. A month has elapsed since the last regular infiltration group was noted entering the pipeline in North Vietnam, and it appears that this dry season's infiltration of regular combat troops may have ended. In addition,

## Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

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## South Vietnam

## Regular Combat Forces

VC/NVA <sup>1</sup>	RVNAF <sup>2</sup>	VC/NVA	RVNAF
153,000	287,000	76,000	85,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		320B	1st
		312th	2nd
		304th	3rd
		711th	Regional
		2nd	Forces

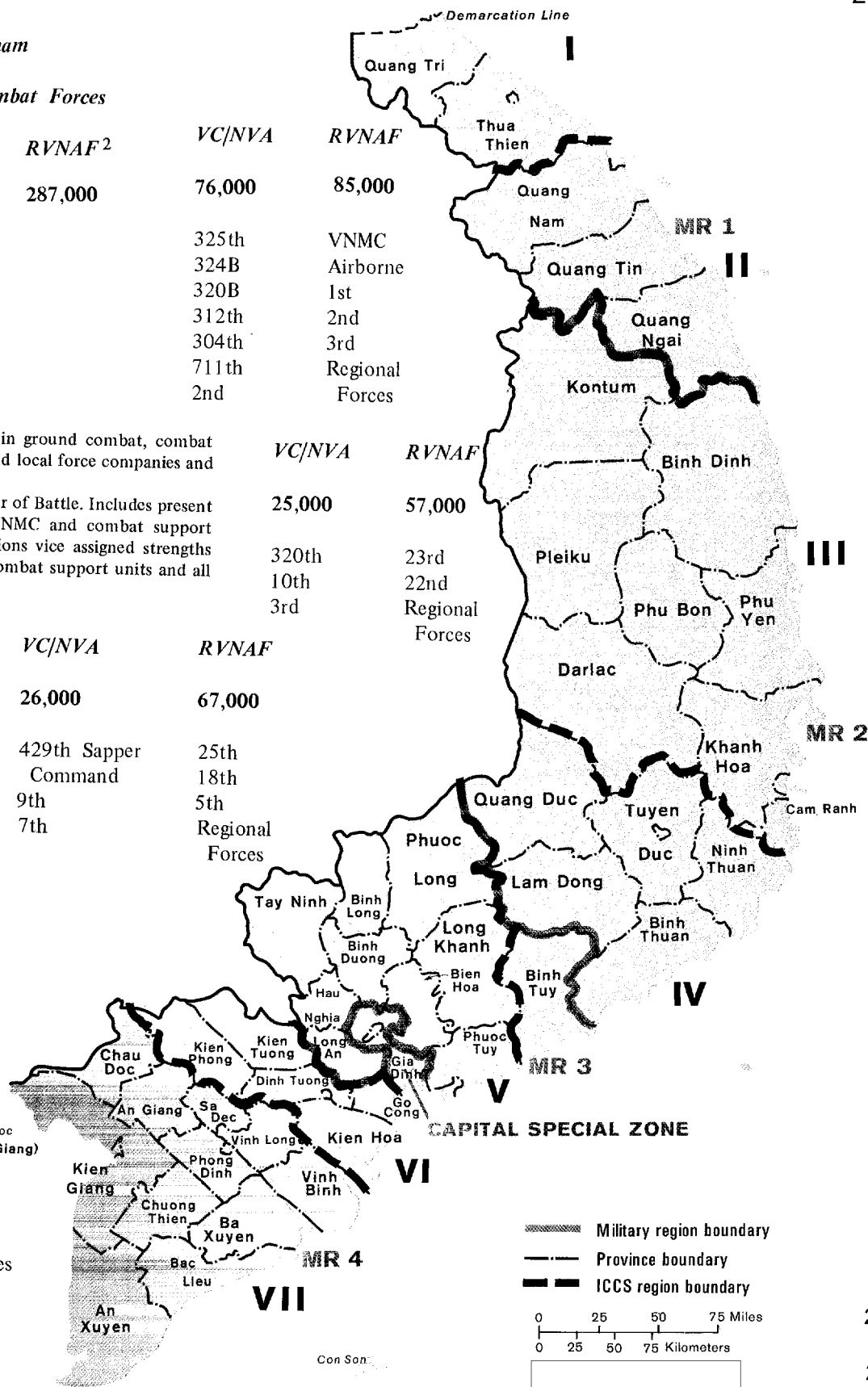
1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

2. Revised RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes present for duty personnel in ARVN/VNMC and combat support units and Regional Force battalions vice assigned strengths of ARVN/VNMC combat and combat support units and all of the Regional Forces.

VC/NVA	RVNAF
25,000	57,000
320th	23rd
10th	22nd
3rd	Regional
	Forces

VC/NVA	RVNAF
26,000	67,000
429th Sapper	25th
Command	18th
9th	5th
7th	Regional
	Forces

VC/NVA	RVNAF
26,000	78,000
5th	21st
1st	9th
	7th
	44th Special
	Tactical Zone
	Regional Forces



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fewer special-purpose groups have been detected entering the system during the past several weeks, indicating that the infiltration of civilian and military specialists also may be abating. As shown in the first table below, the number of starts from 1 September 1972 to 8 April 1973 is significantly less than during the same period in the 1971/72 dry season. The second table gives estimated starts of regular and special-purpose infiltration groups, by week, since 1 January for the current dry season. The latter estimate should be regarded as "soft" because precise data concerning the date of departure of many of the groups are not available.

Table 1

## Infiltration Starts by Season

Destination	1 Sep 71 - 8 Apr 72	1 Sep 72 - 8 Apr 73
<b>Total</b>	<b>112,500</b>	<b>86,500</b>
MR Tri-Thien-Hue	16,500	26,000
MR 5	16,000	9,000
B-3 Front	30,000	14,000
COSVN	36,000	26,500
Southern Laos/MR 559	14,000	11,000

Table 2

Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline  
Since 1 January 1973

	Total <sup>1</sup>	Special-Purpose <sup>2</sup>
1-7 Jan	4,700	400
8-14	3,700	350
15-21	6,100	500
22-28	4,000	150
29-4 Feb	6,300	400
5-11	3,100	250
12-18	2,000	850
19-25	500	500

Table 2

**Number of Personnel Entering the Pipeline  
Since 1 January 1973  
(Continued)**

	Total <sup>1</sup>	Special- Purpose <sup>2</sup>
26-4 Mar	750	750
5-11	1,300	300
12-18	50	50
19-25	600	600
26-1 Apr	200	200
2-8	0	0

1. Including gap-filled groups, except Groups 7001 through 7009. Assuming that these groups departed between 1 January and 10 March, some 4,500 combat troops would be spread over the departures estimated for those weeks.

2. Including those groups which were initially detected without a specific strength, but which have been assigned an average strength of 35.

20. Since the cease-fire, approximately 15,000 personnel are estimated to have started south, but most of these probably now have arrived at their destinations in South Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Those infiltrators that remain in the system are primarily stragglers from regular groups and personnel in special-purpose groups.

***Manpower Developments in South Vietnam***

21. Tenuous evidence from COMINT suggests that a headquarters element of the NVA 203rd Armor Regiment may have deployed from its base of operations in North Vietnam and may now be located in the Cambodia-South Vietnam border area. A radio terminal serving the headquarters element was located by direction finding on 17 March in the border area north of Loc Ninh City. This entity was last located north of Hanoi in the vicinity of Thai Nguyen City on 27 January 1973. The headquarters element probably will serve as the controlling authority for the large number of tanks detected moving to the COSVN area during this dry season. Both this entity and another headquarters element of the 203rd Armor Regiment believed to be currently located in Quang Tri

Province are probably the regional controlling authorities for the North Vietnamese armor in their respective areas of operation.

22. Recent COMINT indicates that two NVA antiaircraft regiments -- the 232nd and 591st -- are preparing to move or are in the process of moving from Quang Tri Province into the Laotian Panhandle. (Although we reported last week that the 232nd Regiment probably had moved out of Quang Tri as early as the first week in March, subsequent communications revealed that because of the lack of fuel for its vehicles, it had not left the province as of 29 March.) Although the destination of the two regiments is unclear, there have been continuing indications of a Communist buildup of antiaircraft defense in southern Laos and extending into northeastern Cambodia.

23. In other air defense developments, preliminary readouts of [ ] 25X1  
[ ] photography reveal that two North Vietnamese SA-2 sites have been established near Khe Sanh during the past eight days. There are now ten SA-2 sites in the Khe Sanh area which have been constructed since the beginning of this year. Four of these were occupied [ ] 25X1  
In addition to the SA-2 sites, a cluster of four antiaircraft artillery sites, two of which are radar-controlled 57-mm batteries, has been identified some 10 miles east of Khe Sanh. Identification of radar-controlled antiaircraft batteries in South Vietnam is rare and suggests a qualitative increase in Communist antiaircraft defense capabilities in this area.

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24. [ ] further details on Viet Cong recruiting in Binh Duong Province, MR 3. In late February, leaders of Viet Cong district units were instructed to initiate recruiting efforts in their respective areas, and by early March the campaign was under way. Cadre were told to recruit 13-15 year-olds by persuading their parents first to consent and second to report to the South Vietnamese authorities that their children were either "missing" or "arrested" by the Viet Cong, reportedly to alleviate any potential government pressure on the families if the youths were discovered in Viet Cong units. In addition, the cadre were told that by recruiting South Vietnamese the Viet Cong hope to reduce the North Vietnamese presence at the local level, consequently enhancing the Viet Cong image. Over the past few years a sizable number of Viet Cong units in MR 3 have become *de facto* NVA units by the large influx of North Vietnamese replacements. Any attempt to reverse this trend would require a high level of sustained recruiting. It is more likely that the recruiting effort is simply aimed at raising the strength of depleted units in MR 3.

*Manpower Developments in Cambodia*

25. The NVA 367th Sapper Regiment has recently been located by [redacted] some 11 miles east of Phnom Penh. This is the first indication that the 367th has relocated nearer to the capital and that it may be involved in the current Communist military activity along the Mekong River. If true, this would be the first known instance of an NVA unit directly participating in the current offensive in Cambodia. We believe, however, that the Khmer Communists continue to be responsible for maintaining virtually all the pressure points around Phnom Penh.

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*Manpower Developments in Northern Laos*

26. During the past week, more evidence was received concerning the continued enemy buildup in the Ta Viang-Xieng Khouangville area, southeast of the Plaine des Jarres. In addition to three battalions of the 335th NVA Regiment that have completed their movement to the Ta Viang/Route 4 area, an NVA sapper battalion and two artillery companies were added to Communist forces in the sector. Moreover, intercepted enemy communications suggest that additional deployments may be forthcoming. Enemy messages also indicated that the North Vietnamese intend to regain control of Route 4 south of Xieng Khouangville, which was lost to Laotian government forces prior to the cease-fire in Laos.



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